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ABSTRACT

Two mixed varieties of Kannada, Perso-Arabic Kannada and English-Kannada, are analyzed with a view to characterizing the sociolinguistic functions of such mixed languages. The introduction consists of a definition of code-mixing, a brief review of earlier studies, and a statement of the aim and scope of the present study. Section Two is devoted to an analysis of a sample text of one of the mixed varieties. This analysis reveals that code-mixing is formally different from both borrowing and code-switching. In the next section, several examples of mixed Kannada are analyzed in relation to their "context of situation." It is shown that code-mixing serves to identify specific types of roles, registers, and connotations. However, the particular types identified by the two varieties are not the same. It is argued that these functions are related to the roles assigned to the constituent languages in the multilingual situation. (Author/CFM)

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ON THE FUNCTIONS OF CODE-MIXING IN KANNADA

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1. Introduction. In many bi- and multi-lingual communities, one often comes across a type of language interaction in which two or more languages in the speakers' repertorie interact to produce a new, "mixed" code characterized by distinctive formal properties and fulfilling specific functional roles. This type of language interaction has been termed "code mixing" by Kachru, who defines it as "the use of one or more languages for consistent transfer of linguistic units from one language into another, and by such a language mixture, developing a new restricted --or not so restricted-- code of linguistic interaction" (Kachru, 1975). Although the phenomenon of code-mixing is probably as old as bilingualism itself, it is only recently that scholars have begun to pay more than cursory attention to its linguistic and sociolinguistic significance. In this regard, three studies stand out: Annamalai (1971), Ure (1974), and Kachru (1975), each of which was developed independently of the others. Annamalai shows that subjecting mixed languages to the same kind of close analysis as is accorded to natural languages in a transformational generative grammar can provide significant insights into such basic theoretical questions as the nature of lexical insertion in transformational grammar. Ure surveys several instances of mixed languages and points out that they have "a central function in developing societies". According to her, mixed languages are "a feature of social, not individual behavior,--a register in the community's register range, learned as part of linguistic socialization" (p.227). Kachru discusses code-mixing as a manifestation of language dependency in bi- and multi-lingual communities such as South Asia. Pointing out that code-mixing is a role-dependent and function-dependent mode of linguistic interaction, he suggests an integrated theory of code-mixing which incorporates a version of the Firthian concept of 'Context of Situation'.

The present paper is a modest attemt to extend the empirical scope of studies on mixed languages. In particular, the focus is on the functional roles of code-mixing, on questions such as why do bilinguals resort to code-mixing? what attitudinal implications, if any, do mixed languages carry? are there any functions that mixed languages perform that are not performed

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by the constituent languages in their "pure" form?, etc. For this purpose, I have examined two mixed varieties of Kannada, a Dravidian language of South India. In one variety, elements of Perso-Arabic origin are mixed with Kannada and in the other variety, the mixture is of English and Kannada. I shall attempt to show that while the overall functions of code-mixing are identical for both varieties, the two kinds of mixture differ significantly in the content of these functions and in the domains in which they perform these functions.

2. Code-mixing in Kannada: an example. Before analysing the functions of the two code-mixed varieties of Kannada in question, it may be useful to briefly examine the nature of the mixture. Consider the following text, excerpted from a contemporary "social" play in Kannada. The passage is spoken by an irate father, who is outraged by his prospective son-in-law's demand of "dowry" in relation to his daughter's wedding.

i. "...kshamisu, dear boy, na:nu use ma:ḍida strong language-u eshṭo: control-maḍo:k no:ḍde. a:dre na:nu educated-u, man of culture-u, broadminded-u, ambo:dnella martubiṭṭu nannello: halli:kaḍe:l huṭṭid commercial minded gama:ra anta tiḷkondu holy alliance of marriage arrange-ma:ḍo: sacred occasion-nalli dowry eshṭu anta ke:ḷti:yalla, nan blood-u boiling point-ge barde iddi:te?"[2]

"...Forgive me, dear boy, I tried so much to control the strong language that I used. But, on this sacred occasion of arranging the holy alliance of marriage, forgetting that I am educated, a man of culture, broadminded, and taking me for a village-born, commercial minded rustic, you ask me how much "dowry" I would give! Wouldn't my blood come to a boiling point?"

Several features of this text merit careful attention. First of all, notice that the mixed elements are not single, isolated lexical items: the mixture takes place on every level of grammatical organization. There are single nouns (dowry), verbs (arrange, control, use), attributive and predicative adjectives (commercial minded, educated), and entire noun phrases with complex internal structure (the sacred occasion of arranging the holy alliance of marriage). Secondly, notice that the mixed elements are not particularly culture bound, they are for the most part ordinary, day to day items for which

perfectly acceptable equivalents exist in colloquial Kannada (and are used in non-mixed varieties). Thirdly, observe that the mixed elements obey the rules of their original language (in this case English) with respect to their internal grammatical organization, while they obey the rules of the absorbing language (in this case Kannada) with respect to their external grammatical organization. For example, the ordering of elements within the noun phrase 'the holy alliance of marriage' conforms to the rules of English grammar, but the positioning of the relative clause (the complex which translates as 'the sacred occasion of arranging the holy alliance of marriage' has a relative clause structure in the above text) with respect to the head noun phrase is in accordance with the structure of Kannada, with the relative clause preceding the head noun. These three features of the text, namely the extensive range of levels on which mixing takes place, the non culture-bound nature of the items, and their participation in a dual grammatical system, may be said to distinguish code-mixing from the related but not identical process of heavy 'borrowing'. An important feature of code-mixing is that the mixed elements do not necessarily fill a "lexical gap" in the absorbing language; they exist side by side with perfectly acceptable equivalents in the absorbing language, forming an additional lexical stratum. It is conceivable that there might be a subtle pragmatic difference in the minds of the users of the mixed language between the mixed elements and their absorbing language counterparts, but such differences --if they exist-- are extremely hard to characterize. I shall return to this question later.

Code-mixing is also different from "code switching" in a number of important respects. In current sociolinguistic literature, the term code switching is employed to refer to the alternate use of two or more languages or varieties in distinct social or functional domains (see, for example, Blom and Gumperz, 1971). The single most important characteristic of code switching seems to be that the switch from one code to the other signals a corresponding switch in the social situation. This is precisely not the case with code-mixing. As the above text illustrates, the switching (or mixing) takes place rapidly, frequently, and almost unconsciously, within a single social event, within a single text, and in fact, several times within a single sentence. It is a hopeless task to try to find distinct,

isolable sociolinguistic correlates for every instance of the shift. Such being the nature of code-mixing, it seems best to attempt a sociolinguistic explanation of code-mixing in terms of the alternation between the mixed and the non-mixed (or "pure") varieties.

3. Code-mixing in Kannada: Why and When. I shall now turn to the questions of the motivations for code-mixing and the (sociolinguistic) circumstances under which code-mixing is resorted to. These questions can only be approached indirectly by examining representative samples of mixed speech (and writing) in relation to their context of situation. To this end, I have analysed data from "social" plays and short stories in Kannada. I shall first discuss the mixing of Perso-Arabic and Kannada and then turn to English-Kannada code-mixing.

The specific functions of the mixing of Perso-Arabic and Kannada can not be adequately explained without reference to the history of language contact between Persian, Arabic and Kannada. The earliest record of contact between Karnataka (the Kannada country) and Persia goes back to 627 A.D. In that year, there was an exchange of ambassadors between the Kannada king Pulikesi and his Persian counterpart, Khusru II. There is also evidence of trade contact with the Arabs from around this period onwards. Between the fourteenth and the sixteenth centuries, the Kannada territory came under frequent attack by the Muslim rulers of the North, culminating in the fall of the great Vijayanagar empire in the sixteenth century. For three hundred years thereafter, the northern portions of Karnataka were continuously under Muslim rule. In the eighteenth century, southern Karnataka also came under Muslim rule, with two popular and highly respected rulers, Hyder Ali and Tippu Sultan, reigning from the capital. It was during this period that Perso-Arabic had the greatest impact on Kannada, especially in the realms of administrative bureaucracy, land management and revenue, and the judiciary. The official state records of this period are in Persian transcribed in the Arabic script. Hindustani, a style of Hindi marked by heavy Perso-Arabic influence, was used in the smaller divisional offices for record-keeping purposes. In addition, the Muslims popularized "hardy" outdoor sports such as hunting, wrestling and horseback riding. As we shall presently see, all of these aspects of language and cultural contact have a direct bearing on the attitudinal connotations of Perso-Arabic mixing with Kannada, as well as the contexts of its use.

The data for the following analysis of the functions of Perso-Arabic code-mixing in Kannada come in part from a "social" play by a highly successful dramatist, T.P. Kailasam, whose use of mixed varieties of Kannada has earned him both commendation and criticism. In the play under discussion, titled 'Poli Kitti' or "Vagabond Kitti", we find a mixture of both Perso-Arabic elements as well as English with Kannada, but --and this is important-- not by the same characters. The characters in the play are drawn from an unusually wide range of social classes, from illiterate day-laborers all the way to the Heir Apparent to the throne of Mysore. It is interesting to note that the more educated a person the more he tends to mix elements from English in his Kannada, and the more earthy and 'physical' a person the greater the mixture of Perso-Arabic elements in his Kannada. The hero of the play is Kitti, who is pictured as a vagabond and a bully, strong, hefty and crude, but beneath the rough exterior, a loyal, generous and tender fellow. Kitti's speech is an example par excellance of Perso-Arabic code-mixing in Kannada. Here are some examples:

ii. "...adu nam akha:ḍa:d a:dattu sa:r. kushti gutra:yso:va:ga la:lmaṭṭi:na cha:ti:g laga:yskondu...moula:li hesarhe:li, khali:franna ya:dma:ḍkoṇḍre voḷḷe ta:khat baratte sa:r, ta:khattu! idu nam akha:ḍa:d a:dattu sa:r!"
"This is the practice in our wrestling school, Sir...When starting the wrestling bout, if you smear your chest with the red earth, take the coach's name, and remember the Khalif, you get real strength, Sir, real strength! This is the practice, Sir, in the school!"

iii. "kama:l sikha:ystidde sa:r! nanna sha:gird sa:r avnu...alla nan friend-u."
"I was teaching him a trick, Sir. He's my sha:gird, Sir...I mean, my friend."

iv. "tarjume ma:do takra:rnalli de:ri a:gho:gatte."[3]
"It gets late in the hassle to translate."

Kitti's language sets him apart from all other characters in the play as a man of a different upbringing and character, a man of muscles, of rough ways and crude behavior. That the playwright was aware of this potential of code-mixing to evoke a certain type of attitudinal association is clear from the fact that he uses code-mixing as a dramatic device and Kitti's mixed speech itself becomes the subject of explicit comment on various occasions in the

course of the play. At one point, for example, flabbergasted by the "strangeness" of Kitti's speech, his Scout Master exclaims,

> "Who brought you up? Where did you grow up? Good Heavens! A bunch of rowdies seems to have joined our brigade. What language do you speak, I say? One quarter Kannada...

And Kitti obligingly completes the sentence,

> "...and three quarters Mussalma:ni, Sir. There are a lot of Muslims in my gang, Sir!"

Notice that code-mixing in Perso-Arabic is regarded as an indicator of "rowdy" behavior and a strange, non-normal upbringing. Further, Kitti's ready explanation reveals that religion is a relevant contextual variable in the mixing of Perso-Arabic and Kannada. At a later point in the play, Kitti visits a friend's home and finds himself in a situation where he has to carry on a conversation with his friend's mother. Now, his friend's mother is an orthodox Brahmin lady who has never been exposed to the sort of mixed speech Kitti employs. Kitti is aware that his language, which served him so well (on the playground) in inspiring awe in his buddies, is entirely inappropriate in this context and struggles to produce the "pure" variety. But old habits die hard; so we find Kitti going back, after each mixed expression, and attempting a paraphrase in "pure" Kannada. This episode illustrates the participant-governed nature of code-mixing and the speakers' sensitivity to its appropriateness in a given sociolinguistic context.

I shall content myself with one last example of code-mixing as a role-identifying device. The following episode illustrates how a mixed variety, like a regional or social variety, gets to be associated with attitudinal stereotypes in the speech community. In the play we have been discussing, Kitti, despite his rough ways, is depicted as a "true scout", ever prepared to help those in distress. In the course of his adventures, he rescues an old man and his family from a house on fire. Further, he even takes care of their little infant for a while. The old man, however, finds it hard to associate such qualities with a person who speaks a mixed language, and wonders,

> "Your character, your language, your talk, don't go with one another at all. You rush into the fire like a hero; you fondle the baby like a woman; you talk a hotch-potch of Turk, Sanskrit and Kannada. You are an unresolvable riddle."

Notice again the link between one's language and his character. Evidently, the qualities of tenderness, helpfulness, etc., are not to be expected of a person who mixes Perso-Arabic elements in his language!

In marked contrast with the mixture of Perso-Arabic elements, the mixing of English with Kannada is considered a matter of prestige, a mark of education, urbaneness and sophistication. Recall that in the first example text quoted above, the speaker perceives himself as "educated, broad-minded, a man of culture" (as contrasted with a village boor), and hence liberated from the shameful relics of a bygone society such as the "dowry" system. This point is further illustrated by the fact that in the Kitti play, the speech of all the educated characters is marked by varying degees of code-mixing with English, with the language of His Highness, the Heir Apparent verging on code-switching. This connotation of 'eliteness' carried by the variety of Kannada mixed with English is, no doubt, a reflection of the status of English as an elite language in the multilinguistic context of South Asia.

In addition to 'role identification', code-mixing also performs the function of 'register identification'. In a multilingual community, the use of different languages in different functional settings results in each language being associated with a particular register or set of registers. Thus in Karnataka, English is associated with the registers of science and technology, allopathic (or, in the native, old fashioned parlance, "English") medicine, higher level administrative bureaucracy, modern literary criticism, etc.,etc., while Sanskrit is associated with religious worship, traditional philosophy and aesthetics, indigenous (Ayurvedic) medicine, among others. Hindustani is associated with the legal register, the registers of Northern Indian (or "Hinduatani") music, and "Unani" medicine and of sports such as wrestling. Such an assignment of functional roles has important implications for the nature of code-mixing. When a speaker wants to sound knowledgeable or authentic or simply wants to be precise in discousing upon a specific topic, he tends to mix elements from the language commonly associated with that topic.

We have already seen an example of this phenomenon in texts (ii) and (iii), where Kitti mixes elements from Perso-Arabic in showing off his prowess as an accomplished, professional wrestler. The following extract taken from a satirical sketch in a Kannada feature magazine illustrates this point with respect to the mixing of English and Kannada. The conversation takes place in the common room of a grade school.

v. "Madam, nim class-ge hosa: admission a:gide." Attendance register-nalli sahi ma:ḍuttiruva madam-ge he:ḷidaru, head master-u. "Huḍugi tumba intelligent-ante. iduvarege prati exam-nallu: avaḷe first-ante... huḍugi curuka:gidda:ḷe. ta:ne: bandu tanna admission bagge ke:ḷi-koṇḍaḷu. parent's signature ha:kiro: application-nu: tandidlu no:ḍi..."

"avḷa progress report koḍti:ra: sa:r, no:ḍva."

"sudden-a:gi transfer order bantante, avaḷa tande:ge. certificate tagoṇḍu horṭubandbiṭṭru..."[4]

"Madam, there has been a new admission into your class", the head master told the teacher who was putting her signature in the attendance register. "The girl is said to be very intelligent. It seems she has come out first in every exam so far. She is very smart. She herself came and enquired about the admission. She had even brought the application with her parent's signature on it..."

"Sir, would you give me her progress report, I'd like to see..."

"It seems her father received the transfer order all of a sudden. They just took the certificate [of transfer, from the school] and left..."

In the above passage, the mixing of items such as attendance register, progress report, parent's signature, certificate [of transfer], exam, admission, etc., serves to identify the register of educational administration and the use of such items is intended to give an air of authenticity to the description. One can again perform a detailed linguistic analysis of the text to show that the mixed elements are not just isolated "borrowings" but are an integral part of the text with their own distinctive internal and external patterning, but I shall not go into that aspect here. While the formal characteristics of this kind of code-mixing are identical to the role-identificatory code-mixing discussed

above, the function of this kind of register-oriented code-mixing is to identify and exploit the specialized denotations carried by the mixed elements in the register to which they belong. In this restricted sense, one of the functions of code-mixing may be said to be to fill certain kinds of lexical gaps in the absorbing language. We may call this the technical function of code-mixing.

This leads me to the final point I want to make, concerning what may be termed the pragmatic function of code-mixing. This relates to the perception --real or imagined-- by the user of the mixed language, of the special connotations of expressiveness, refinement, powerfulness, etc., of the mixed elements as opposed to their equivalents in the absorbing language. I say 'real or imagined' because such connotations may be absent in the language from which the mixed elements are drawn. Thus, to say 'nanagondu favor ma:dti:ra?' (Will you do me a favor?) may be felt to be a more refined way of asking a favor than by the use of the Kannada word, upaka:ra, which also translates as 'favor'. However, upaka:ra is felt to demand a more serious sense of gratitude in return than 'favor'. Or again, to introduce one's cousin with 'ivnu nam cousin-u' is considered to be a more sophisticated mode of introduction than with the use of the Kannada term,say, so:daraḷiya. (I must emphasize that this applies to larger units and expressions as well.) Thus code-mixing is often characterized by such subtle, intangible distinctions which are hard to characterize explicitly. Once again, the reasons for such distinctions in the bilingual's subjective lexicon and phrase book probably lie in the different values and status assigned to the languages in the repertoire.

4. Conclusion. In this paper, I have attempted to show that mixed languages, despite the neglect of linguists and the disparagement of many (including their users!), performs important sociolinguistic functions in multilingual communities. The three functions singled out for discussion are (i) the attitudinal function, based on role identification; (ii)the technical function, based on register identification; and (iii) the pragmatic function. These functions are directly related to the roles asigned to the languages in question in the repertorie of the speakers as well as to the attitudinal associations carried by them.

FOOTNOTES

[1]I am deeply indebted to Professor Braj Kachru for his comments and suggestions. All shortcomings in this paper are of course mine.

[2]from Tollu Gaṭṭi (by T.P. Kailasam), Bangalore, 1969.

[3]from Poli Kitti (by T.P. Kailasam), Bangalore, 1967.

[4]from Sudha, December 15, 1974., Bangalore.

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